

Landscaping with Evergreens

One important aspect of successful landscape design is the use of evergreens. Evergreens come in different shapes, colors, and textures creating continuous interest. While many evergreens grow into massive specimens, dwarf varieties are perfect in planting beds, as borders, or to hug hillsides. Low-growing evergreens are useful in a variety of locations, including around the foundation of a house. Some additional tips on using evergreens are listed below.

- Use evergreens to screen a landscape. Tall varieties of juniper, yew, and arborvitae are great for small spaces to hide a patio and provide privacy. Broadleaf evergreens, such as rhododendrons, can also be used as a screen or focal point.
- Evergreens with a tight growth habit (such as yews, boxwood and junipers) are perfect for pruning into shapes or hedges.
- Choose tall evergreen varieties, with dark green foliage, to accentuate bright colors. Select colorful evergreens to add year-round interest to other plantings. Low, spreading evergreens become a groundcover that is perfect for filling a space (perhaps a hillside) with year-round color and interest. They discourage weeds, stop erosion, and look good year-round.
- Plant artistically sheared evergreens on both sides of a gate, or along a path, to give an entry a bolder, more formal feeling.
- Highlight the colors in the yard by planting evergreens. A blue spruce looks great against bold oranges and reds. Bright yellows look great against a dark background.
- Plant a big, bold evergreen in a large container as a statement piece. Choose a stunning evergreen such as 'Emerald Twister' Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii* 'Torquis') or 'Chief Joseph' pine (*Pinus contorta* var. *latifolia*) and treat it as a specimen plant in the landscape. 'Chief Joseph' grows slowly and transitions from greenish-yellow to yellow as temperatures drop in the autumn and winter.
- Flowering evergreens add landscape drama. Consider mountain laurels, rhododendrons, or pieris to add early color.



Checklist for December

Flower and Vegetable Garden

- ✓ Store bulbs, tubers and corms at 45-50°F to prevent sprouting. If shriveling occurs, rewrap in paper bags with damp peat moss. [UMD Factsheet](#)

Indoor Plants

- ✓ Groom and clean indoor plants as needed. Don't overwater; let soil dry to keep plants fungus gnat free. [UMD Factsheet](#)
- ✓ Keep your Christmas cactus and poinsettia in bright natural light for best leaf and flower development. [UMD Factsheet](#)
- ✓ Keep your Christmas tree stand full of water.
- ✓ Recycle your cut Christmas tree according to your town's guidelines.
- ✓ Place a pre-chilled bulb into a jar with stones at the bottom. Fill with water to just reach the bulb bottom. Enjoy!

Lawn & Garden

- ✓ Place row covers over strawberries.
- ✓ Continue to water young, newly planted trees and shrubs until the ground freezes. [UMD Factsheet](#)
- ✓ Inspect and clean your gardening tools. Sharpen them now to be ready for next year. [University of Minnesota Factsheet](#)
- ✓ Store cut firewood outdoors to prevent insects from coming inside.
- ✓ Store birdseed in metal cans with tight fitting lids.